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**Wednesday
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**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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| Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office |
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| Lord Benyon | Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs |
| Baroness Berridge | Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education and Department for International Trade |
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| Lord Greenhalgh | Minister of State, Home Office and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government |
| Lord Grimstone of Boscobel | Minister of State, Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and Department for International Trade |
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| Lord Stewart of Dirleton | Advocate-General for Scotland |
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| Baroness Vere of Norbiton | Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport |
| Baroness Williams of Trafford | Minister of State, Home Office |
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Written Statements

Wednesday, 19 May 2021

First Implementation Plan for Genome UK

[HLWS39]

Lord Bethell: Last September, after months of hard work across the UK genomics community, I was delighted to launch *Genome UK* – the UK’s genomic healthcare strategy.

Ultimately, the strategy set out a vision to create the most advanced genomic healthcare system in the world to deliver better healthcare at a lower cost.

Thanks to achievements made over the last 70 years, from the discovery of the structure of DNA to the completion of the 100,000 Genomes Project, the UK is rightly recognised as a world-leader in genomics.

But for the UK to remain at the forefront of international competition in genomic research and healthcare, and attract investment, it is essential that we start to deliver on the commitments set out in our strategy.

I am therefore delighted to inform the House of the launch of the 2021/22 Genome UK Implementation Plan. This publication will demonstrate the great strides we have already made in delivering on our vision and outlines the clear actions we will progress over the next year.

This Implementation Plan has been agreed by members of the National Genomics Board, a group of senior life sciences sector stakeholders, which I chair with Sir John Bell. Over the last six months, we have engaged with our delivery partners and key stakeholders to identify projects and programmes that can be delivered during 2021/22.

We have drafted a diverse and ambitious package of actions and as part of this, I am pleased to announce the following:

- A major drive, led by Genomics England, to improve the diversity of genomic data, addressing the historic under-representation of data from minority ethnic communities in genomic datasets, which results in health inequalities. The work will include widespread community engagement alongside sequencing and analytic tool development.
- The roll-out of whole genome sequencing to patients with a suspected rare disease and certain cancers in the NHS Genomic Medicine Service, in partnership with Genomics England. This is a truly transformational milestone for patients, and for our overarching one million genomes commitment – our ambition to sequence 500,000 genomes in the NHS and 500,000 in UK Biobank, creating the most advanced genomic healthcare system in the world.
- Proof of concept work, led by Genomics England in partnership with the NHS, to deliver the first phase of a next-generation approach for the diagnosis and

treatment of cancer, integrating multiple data sources and new technologies to support faster and more comprehensive genomic testing for cancer in line with the NHS Long Term Plan.

- Our Future Health (formerly known as the Accelerating Detection of Disease challenge) will help drive developments in the next generation of diagnostics and clinical tools – including the evaluation of polygenic risk scores (PRS), drug discovery, and smart clinical trials. In 2021, Our Future Health will pilot participant recruitment processes to build towards their five million participant ambition. Our Future Health will conduct feedback pilot studies in 2022 to test approaches to deliver health-related information, including PRS, to participants.

- NIHR, MRC and Wellcome Trust will, over the next five years, provide funding to the Global Alliance for Genomics and Health (GA4GH) to develop standards and policies for sharing genomic and related health data. GA4GH aims to ensure its standards are easily accessible and ready for use by global genomic programs and data sharing initiatives. It will proactively engage stakeholders at national and organisational level to drive uptake of GA4GH standards.

Given that *Genome UK* runs over ten years, some of its 45 commitments are either long term or will be delivered through cumulative action over the coming years. Implementation of the strategy will therefore be phased, so we have mainly focused on actions taking place this year. Genomics is a fast-moving field, and a phased approach will allow us to review our commitments and reflect emerging science and the latest research findings. Our intention is to align future iterations of this plan with Government funding cycles.

These commitments are just some of the first important steps on the journey to realising the vision set out in *Genome UK*. However, achieving all our objectives will require new investment over the next decade, with continued collaboration and funding from the public, private and charity sectors becoming ever more important.

Genomic research and innovation will transform healthcare in this country to benefit patients and drive our economic recovery. Given our reputation as a world-leader in genomic healthcare and research, it has the potential to play a key role in delivering our wider goal of becoming a global life sciences hub.

This iteration of the implementation plan is largely England-focused, but some aspects are UK-wide. For example, the world-leading research programs, including COG-UK, the consortium which delivered large scale Covid genome sequencing. We have therefore developed this plan with the support of our partners in the Devolved Administrations.

We will continue to work with our partners from the Devolved Administrations, the NHS, industry and research, via the National Genomics Board and other venues, to ensure that we deliver on our goal to create the most advanced genomic healthcare system in the world. I

also want to emphasise that engagement and dialogue with the healthcare workforce, patients and the diverse UK population, will be at the heart of the journey to reach the vision set out in the strategy.

Post Office Update

[HLWS37]

Lord Callanan: My Honourable friend the Minister for London and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets) (Paul Scully) has today made the following statement:

Following the Prime Minister's commitment on 26 February 2020 and the Ministerial Statements of 10 June 2020 and 30 September 2020, the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry was established as a non-statutory inquiry. In accordance with the terms of s.15 Inquiries Act, the government has now given notice to convert the Inquiry into a statutory inquiry under the Inquiries Act 2005 on 1st June 2021 and at the same time amend the Inquiry's terms of reference, as set out below.

Scope of the Inquiry

Government wants to be fully assured that through the Inquiry there is a public summary of the failings associated with Post Office Ltd's Horizon IT system. The Inquiry will draw on the findings made by Mr Justice Fraser from the *Bates and others v Post Office Limited* Group Litigation (in particular Judgment (No3) 'Common Issues' and Judgment (No 6) 'Horizon issues'), the judgments of the Court of Appeal (Criminal Division) in *R v Hamilton and others*, and other judgments in which convictions have been quashed. It will consider all other relevant evidence, listen to those that have been affected, understand what went wrong, and assess whether lessons have been learned and whether concrete changes have taken place, or are underway, at Post Office Ltd.

The Inquiry shall:

A: Understand and acknowledge what went wrong in relation to Horizon, leading to the civil proceedings in *Bates and others v Post Office Limited* and the quashing of criminal convictions, by drawing from the judgments of Mr Justice Fraser in *Bates and others*, the judgments of the Court of Appeal (Criminal Division) in *R v Hamilton and others*, other judgments in which convictions have been quashed, affected postmasters' experiences and any other relevant evidence in order to identify what key lessons must be learned for the future.

B: Build upon the findings of Mr Justice Fraser and the judgments of the criminal courts specified in A above by obtaining all available relevant evidence from Post Office Ltd, Fujitsu, BEIS and UKGI to establish a clear account of 1) the implementation and failings of Horizon over its lifecycle and 2) Post Office Ltd's use of information from Horizon when taking action against persons alleged to be responsible for shortfalls.

C: Assess whether Post Office Ltd has learned the lessons from the criticisms made by Mr Justice Fraser in his judgments following the 'Common Issues' and 'Horizon Issues' trials and those identified by affected postmasters and has delivered or made good progress on the organisational and cultural changes necessary to ensure a similar case does not happen in the future.

D: Assess whether the commitments made by Post Office Ltd within the mediation settlement – including the historical shortfall scheme – have been properly delivered.

E: Assess whether the processes and information provided by Post Office Ltd to postmasters are sufficient:

- i. to enable both parties to meet their contractual obligations; and
- ii. to enable postmasters to run their businesses. This includes assessing whether Post Office Ltd's related processes such as recording and resolving postmaster queries, dispute handling, suspension and termination are fit for purpose. In addition, determine whether the quality of the service offer for postmasters and their relationship with Post Office Ltd has materially improved since the conclusions reached by Mr Justice Fraser.

F: Examine the historic and current governance and whistleblowing controls in place at Post Office Ltd, identify any relevant failings, and establish whether current controls are now sufficient to ensure that failing leading to the issues covered by this Inquiry do not happen again.

The Inquiry will consider only those matters set out in the preceding sections A-F. The Inquiry will not consider any issue which is outside the scope of the powers conferred upon the Inquiry by the Inquiries Act 2005. The Horizon group damages settlement (albeit the Inquiry may examine the events leading to the settlement), and/or the engagement or findings of any other supervisory or complaints mechanisms, including in the public sector, are outside the Inquiry's scope.

Governance

The Inquiry will be led by Sir Wyn Williams FLSW, as the Chair of the Inquiry. There will be an Inquiry Secretariat and Sir Wyn will be supported by up to 4 assessors. These assessors will support Sir Wyn Williams by providing advice on the sources, content and interpretation of evidence received as appropriate. They may also provide independent scrutiny and challenge in relation to emerging findings and recommendations.

Publication report date

The Inquiry should make any recommendations it sees fit, including actions that may, in its view, be appropriate as a result of its findings. The Inquiry will aim to submit its findings to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy in Autumn 2022. The final report will be published by the Secretary of State and the government will respond in due course.

PrivatBank (Recognition of Third-Country Resolution Action) Instrument 2021

[HLWS38]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: My honourable friend the Economic Secretary to the Treasury (John Glen) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

I wish to update the House on the steps that HM Treasury has taken in regard to Public Joint Stock Company Commercial Bank PrivatBank (PrivatBank).

On the 14 May 2021 I approved the Bank of England's decision to recognise the bail-in by the National Bank of Ukraine and the Ukrainian authorities between the 18th–20th December 2016 of four English law governed loans made by UK SPV Credit Finance plc to PrivatBank, in accordance with Section 89H of the Banking Act 2009. The Bank of England instrument which gave effect to the

recognition decision will be laid before Parliament today and has been published on the Bank of England website.

The Bank of England and HM Treasury have independently reached the determination that the bail-in of the four loans was broadly comparable in anticipated results and objectives to an equivalent UK resolution, and that none of the conditions for refusal to recognise within section 89H(4) of the Banking Act 2009 were satisfied.

Decisions over whether to recognise a third-country resolution action are regarded by the Financial Stability Board as a key aspect of an effective cross-border resolution regime. Under UK law, the Bank of England is required to make a decision on whether or not to recognise resolution actions when requested to do so by a third-country resolution authority, that decision can only be made with the approval of HM Treasury.

Written Answers

Wednesday, 19 May 2021

Banks

Asked by **Lord Taylor of Warwick**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by Monveo The Banks and the Fintechs: Creating Better Banking Together, published on 11 May; and what steps they are taking to encourage banks to partner with Fintech companies. [HL197]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The report highlights how collaboration between banks and fintechs can deliver a wide range of innovative products and services for consumers.

The Government is committed to retaining the UK's position at the global cutting edge of fintech. In line with this, the Government last year commissioned the independent Kalifa Review of UK Fintech; this Review was published in February and made important recommendations for the continued success of UK fintech; the Government has set out to Parliament the actions that it and the financial regulators are taking against these recommendations.

The Kalifa Review highlighted the value of partnerships between banks and fintechs in both improving financial services for consumers, and supporting fintechs to scale. The Government recognises that combining the fintech sector's strengths in innovation and agility, with the strengths of large financial services institutions, has the potential to deliver better products and services for a larger number of businesses and customers.

That is why the Government has strongly supported initiatives such as the Fintech Pledge. The Pledge is the first initiative of its kind globally and is a commitment from signatory banks to provide increased transparency and guidance to support fintechs in navigating their onboarding processes. The Pledge has signatories from various leading financial services institutions, including the UK's five largest banks.

BBC: Directors

Asked by **Lord Blunkett**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are the previously declared political affiliations of the current non-executive directors of the BBC; and what are the (1) present and (2) past, political affiliations of members of the BBC Board. [HL13]

Baroness Barran: As per the BBC Charter, the Chair and Nations Members of the BBC Board are appointed by Her Majesty the Queen, via Order in Council, following a fair and open competition. All other members of the BBC Board are appointed by the BBC.

Upon appointment, the Governance Code requires that any significant political activity undertaken by an appointee in the last five years is declared. This is defined as including holding office, public speaking, making a recordable donation or candidature for election. As per the Governance Code on Public Appointments, 'political activity should not affect any judgement of merit nor be a bar to appointment'.

The BBC Board's Code of Practice also requires members of the BBC Board to publicly declare their personal interests (including any political interests), and to regularly update this declaration. The BBC publishes each Board member's Declaration of Personal Interests annually via its website: <https://www.bbc.com/aboutthebbc/whoware/bbcboard>.

Those BBC Board Members appointed by Her Majesty the Queen made the following declarations upon appointment:

- 1) Chair: Richard Sharp declared he had made one political donation to the Conservative Party of £2,500 during the past five years at time of appointment.
- 2) Scotland: Steve Morrison declared no such political activity during the past five years at time of appointment.
- 3) England: Sir Robbie Gibb declared that between 2017 and 2019 he was Director of Communications at No10 Downing Street during the past five years at time of appointment.
- 4) Wales: Dame Elan Cross Stephens declared no such political activity during the past five years at time of initial appointment in 2017 and reappointment in 2021.
- 5) Northern Ireland: This role is currently vacant.

Coronavirus: Disease Control

Asked by **Lord Scriven**

To ask Her Majesty's Government which companies were placed on the "VIP" fast-track for potential contracts related to the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL236]

Lord Bethell: We are unable to provide the list of suppliers requested as this information is commercially sensitive.

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Asked by **Lord Mendelsohn**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bethell on 23 April (HL14927), whether such guidance also applies to all clinically extremely vulnerable people, including those with chronic kidney disease. [HL176]

Lord Bethell: All clinically extremely vulnerable individuals, including those with chronic kidney disease, will be offered a second dose of the vaccine within eight weeks of their first in line with advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccine and Immunisation. Current national guidance for clinically extremely vulnerable

people, including those with chronic kidney disease, advises them to follow the guidance in place for the wider population.

Cryptocurrencies: Environment Protection

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the environmental impact of cryptocurrencies on companies trying to achieve carbon neutral status. [HL175]

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the environmental impact of cryptocurrencies. [HL178]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government has been monitoring developments within the cryptoasset industry, including rising energy usage.

The Government has already taken action to ensure the UK is the world-leading centre for green finance including through announcing an intention to make disclosures aligned with the Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) fully mandatory across the economy by 2025, making the UK the first country to do so.

Additionally, the Government has committed to the implementation of a green taxonomy. This will allow us to accelerate our work towards a greener financial sector, by providing a common definition for environmentally sustainable economy activities.

The Government's private finance objective for the upcoming COP26 climate change forum is to ensure that every professional financial decision takes climate change into account. The recovery from COVID-19 will determine the mitigation and adaptation pathways for decades to come.

The finance campaign will provide the conditions for a future that is genuinely greener, more resilient and more sustainable than the past. Action on finance underpins all the other COP campaigns: adaptation and resilience, energy transition, nature and zero-emission vehicles. Without the right levels of finance, the rest is not possible.

The Cryptoasset Taskforce, comprising HM Treasury, the Financial Conduct Authority, and the Bank of England, considers the impact of cryptoassets and assesses what, if any, regulation is required in response. The Government stands ready to respond to emerging risks or changes in the market and will continue to monitor developments in cryptoassets.

Driving Licences: EU Countries

Asked by Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer

To ask Her Majesty's Government with which EU Member States they have (1) reached, and (2) signed, reciprocal agreements on driving licences. [HL225]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Department for Transport has successfully agreed arrangements with all EU/EEA Member States for the mutual recognition of photocard licences. As such, visitors with UK photocard licences will not need to carry an additional International Driving Permit (IDP) when driving in any EU/EEA Member State.

The UK has secured permanent or long-term reciprocal arrangements for the exchange of licences with: Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia Switzerland, Bulgaria, Iceland, Lithuania, Hungary, Netherlands, Sweden, Latvia and Belgium. The UK is working to conclude the formal agreements where required.

Driving Licences: France

Asked by Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether a UK citizen who is resident in France can nominate an individual in the UK to buy an International Driving Permit on their behalf. [HL228]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: A person must be resident in the UK and have a full UK driving licence to be able to obtain an International Driving Permit in the UK. An individual who is not resident in the UK is unable to nominate someone to buy one on their behalf.

Asked by Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer

To ask Her Majesty's Government why a reciprocal agreement on driving licences between the UK and France has not yet been signed. [HL229]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Department for Transport has successfully agreed arrangements with France for the mutual recognition of photocard licences. As such, visitors with UK photocard licences will not need to carry an additional International Driving Permit when driving in France. We have also secured interim arrangements with the French authorities which will allow UK licence holders resident in France, to continue to use their valid UK licence until 1 January 2022. We are working with the French Government to finalise a permanent licence exchange agreement as soon as possible.

Driving Licences: Spain

Asked by Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer

To ask Her Majesty's Government when an agreement on driving licences will be signed with the government of Spain given UK citizens in that country will lose their right to drive on 30 June. [HL227]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Department for Transport officials are making every effort to reach a swift understanding with Spain regarding long-term arrangements for licence exchange, without the need for a practical test, for UK licence holders resident in Spain.

The British Embassy in Madrid is also working with the Spanish Government to secure an extension to the current interim arrangements, to allow UK licence holders to continue to use their UK licence while discussions on the agreement conclude.

Kuflink

Asked by Lord Sikka

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the Prudential Regulation authority carried out capital adequacy tests on Kuflink Ltd and related entities; and what was the outcome of those tests. [HL189]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: As you may be aware, Kuflink Ltd is not a regulated deposit taking firm, i.e. a bank, and hence are not regulated by the Prudential Regulation Authority. Peer to peer firms are instead regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), which in this instance extends to rules regarding capital requirements.

The FCA is an independent non-governmental body responsible for regulating and supervising the financial services industry. Although the Treasury sets the legal framework for the regulation of financial services, it has strictly limited powers in relation to the FCA. In particular, the Treasury has no general power of direction over the FCA and therefore it is not appropriate to request information regarding capital adequacy tests of individual firms.

Lyme Disease

Asked by Lord McCrea of Magherafelt and Cookstown

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent (1) research they have commissioned, and (2) investment they have made, relating to a cure for Lyme disease. [HL171]

Lord Bethell: The Department funds research through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). The NIHR has no current active projects into Lyme disease. The NIHR Health Protection Research Unit on Emerging and Zoonotic Infections has undertaken work on the understanding of and treatments for Lyme disease, including looking at incidence of the disease in England and Wales.

NHS

Asked by Baroness Gale

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the next stage of the NHS People Plan will be published. [HL35]

Lord Bethell: In 2021-22 our focus is on supporting the immediate recovery of National Health Service staff and services. We are working with NHS England and NHS Improvement, Health Education England and systems and employers to determine our future workforce and people priorities. This will feed into the development

of a longer term strategy, overseen by the National People Board.

Rail Review

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they intend to publish the findings of the Williams Rail Review. [HL83]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The government is committed to bringing forward vital sector-wide reforms and commissioned Keith Williams to carry out the first root and branch review of the rail industry in a generation. The Williams Rail Review was in its final stages at the outbreak of Covid-19 and was then extended to ensure that its conclusions were appropriate in the light of the ongoing pandemic. The reforms are as important as ever and the government intends on publishing a White Paper with details of its plans for rail reform soon.

Railways: East Anglia

Asked by Lord Bradshaw

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they are aware of any proposals for a scheme to double the single railway line between Soham and Ely on the line between Felixstowe and the north of England. [HL14]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The 'Soham Area Capacity Enhancement' scheme is at an early stage of development as part of the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline. Addressing this pinch-point is a key enabler for growing the number of freight trains on the nationally important corridor from Felixstowe to the Midlands and North.

Social Services: Reform

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made on securing cross-party consensus on reforming the adult social care system. [HL39]

Lord Bethell: In March 2020, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care wrote to Parliamentarians to initiate cross-party discussions. These discussions were paused as a result of COVID-19. As we emerge from the pandemic, we will be engaging with stakeholders and Parliamentarians to discuss priorities for reform.

World Heritage Sites: Liverpool

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the economic benefits of Liverpool's World Heritage status. [HL105]

Baroness Barran: We know from the excellent report prepared by the UK National Commission for UNESCO that UNESCO designations such as World Heritage status

are worth over £150 million a year to communities across the UK and in its Overseas Territories, as well as contributing to sustainable development and other policy goals. We do not have a precise figure which can be attributed to the world heritage site of Liverpool Maritime

Mercantile City, but we know that many international tourists are keen to visit the UK's 32 world heritage sites, with concomitant economic benefits across the tourism and hospitality sector.

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